

School is the soup
This is the spice

Editor — Sue Shepherd
Assistant Editor — Judy Woods
Arts Editor — Nancy Levey

Cover drawn by Sally Brophy

ODE TO A HEAP OF RAGS,
IN A DOORWAY,
WITH NO SHOES ON.

Delapses Resurgam

Say brother —
Ya, you!
Look at me when I hate you,
You,
The son of humility,
The father of persuasion.
Your hand
 quivering,
juts out at mine
from dark doorways,
as you stand
in stale urine
 begging
in the name of God.

Say brother —
I hear your voice
Screaming
 and
Whispering
in dark hallways,
and I wonder,
who gives you the right
to breathe the air
I've worked so hard
to taste

You brother —
Stand alone in lines,
waiting for them
to move
 closer
to quench your empty stomach
each step moves you closer
 the kettle
farther from mankind
in the sand I now grow in.

Say brother —
Stench wreaks from your pores
A hallow of odor
surrounds you.
Day is night
Night is day
trapped in your decaying
carcus
moving,
festering,
closer to the freedom you seek.

Say brother —
listen —
I once saw a seed
fall from a fine cart,
Planted by the foot of a man
 in a hurry.
Ya brother —
It rooted
 and grew
under the foot of men.
Its leaves carried the scars
of its struggle.
Bruised and battle worn
its stalk reached the sky
determined,
it blossomed in a mud puddle.
So —
Who are you
to lie dormant
in fertile ground
with roots
that stretch to mine
and take from me
the juices I seek and find

Michael Cornwall

THE LAST UNICORN

So innocent
as it looks at you
over the stream . . .
Its eyes so naive
as its whiteness
shows its purity . . .
It knows not
what is past the trees
or across the stream
or over the hill . . .
It knows only
what it sees
for it is
The Last Unicorn . . .
The end of make-believe . . .
The end of what might have been . . .

Sally Brophy

DOING FAVORS

Doing favors,
Is it worth it?
This time it sure was.
Young ladies often say yes, whey they
would like to say no.
Being so sweet she said yes.
She had never met him,
All she knew was,
His mother was a very nice lady.
He arrived to take her out.
There they were
One night-watchman,
While the other sold perfume.
In the same department store.
But she had a boyfriend,
But the nice lady was right.
She knew how it was supposed to be,
But did they?
Give them time and they will learn.
It was not that hard after they got to
know each other.
They fell in love,
And still are.
What happened after that everyone
knows,
They got married,
And moved to the Big Apple,
Newlyweds in the mist of a huge
Dirty city.
They had two children,
Took great care.
And the children raised their
parents well.
Be good to them as they were,
Keep them in line and happy.
That's what happens when you do favors,
Not always so perfectly though.
But when it's right, it's right,
And it will never change.
No never . . .

Alexandra Gifford

Sitting by the lake
I see a person in a daze
And all I hear is a guitar
and the songs that she plays.

She stops for a moment
Doesn't even make a sound
Nothing is moving
on the ground.

There's a breeze
in the air
And wind blowing
through her hair.

She picks up her guitar
and starts to play
I sat down next to her
and asked if I could stay.

She said to me
as if she were to talk
I listened for a while
and then took a walk.

She's like me in a way
showing her feelings
in a song,
Though I do it in poems
There's no right or wrong.

We all do it
In our own special ways
And all this started
when I saw her in a daze.

Lori Tvert

FEUD

From adjacent porches
The women, both aproned, hard-fisted
Shriek threats that echo
Past railings
Past clotheslines
Woven six floors from the street
The tenor of the curse
Escalates;
Accusations bite the wind
Volley, ricochet off brick and stone.
This is fugue; voices cannot
Alternate, refuse to finish
I hear from the alleyway
Cacophany of interruption
Masking sadness behind clenched jaws
The tears fall inside the heart
While outside
Metal strikes metal:
Sparks
 (if only)
Angry, red
 (I could)
Cinders
 (Like DAVID)
Blowing
 OR SOLOMON
And Burning us
STOP THEM!

Estelle Judith Uckerman

ODE TO LOVE, A DIALOGUE

Do you love me?
* . . . I love you.
You don't sound it.
* . . . Oh, come on. Don't start.
Who's starting, you don't love me do you?
* . . . I love you!!
Why?
* . . . Oh, shit on it!
Do you love me because it's convenient?
* . . . NO!
Then, why?
* . . . Come on will you!
Will you ever leave me?
* . . . I don't know.
Oh, God, Your gonna leave me!!!
* . . . No I'm not. I mean . . .
You just said you would.
* . . . No I didn't I said . . .
Forget it. I don't even know why I try.

Michael Cornwall

NEWPORT

America's Cup
I forget how they ended up
We own a condo on Bellview Ave.
In there among the mansions
Each with its own distinctive passions

My sister works in that town
After I visit I leave with a frown
It's a tourist trap
But I'll always continue to go back.

Michael Stafford

CODE

I was watching the towering figures of Charlie Chaplin, Jackie Coogan flash on the screen. The movie was "The Kid". The pianist played slower and faster, keeping time with the theme. I was with children, standing, yelling and crying till it was over.

I ran all the way home to tell my mother what I saw. I ran by the lift that never worked. It was sitting in a well that made it look like a medieval torture chamber of twisted iron. I ran up the two flights with giant's steps. I was ready to open the door, and I heard voices. I opened the door and stepped into a cloud of smoke from pipes, cigars and cigarettes. Over the table hung a single strand of electrical wire with a bulb glaring and belching it's dim light. Around the table sat the players.

The men turned out to be officers of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Their tunics were blood red, adorned with gold braids, piled high on a chair, sometimes showing "Gradhalters" — the steel bands that made them hold perfect posture. This gave them the appearance of men whose orders were obeyed.

The women, including my mother, were talking in the bedroom. The card game lasted and lasted for hours. The guests were served coffee and Viennese pastry. I was fidgety; I sat, I went out, I came back. I looked at my friend, the small grand father clock, the pendulum swinging with a steady beat. I was afraid to watch the game because the officers looked so fierce.

However, I saw money paid after each game. I saw money being borrowed, and then the game came to an end.

The officers put on their tunics, adjusted the gradhalters, and each looked a picture to envy, a boy's real soldier.

Then hell broke loose; the lending officer wanted his money immediately, and the borrower asked for time. This went on for a long time. The women came out of the bedroom to see the reason for the yelling.

The lending officer shouted. "You know the code; if you cannot pay a gambling debt you haven't any alternative but to use your service revolver to exonerate your honor."

The borrower pleaded. "Would you be that low to force me to kill myself over a small debt? You know I am only married a short while."

The voices were reaching a crescendo. The sword of Damocles hung over the newly married officer. The military code did not allow room for choice. It was his choice for life or his choice for honor. The devotion to his wife, their marriage, hung on the cruelty of a fellow officer. The smoke in the room was stifling; my eyes burned and teared. Everyone was waiting for an answer.

This bastard must have an alternative motive. What is it?

The voices again were squelched by the serving of coffee. Then came the thunderbolt.

With a commanding voice he said. "Your wife will sleep with me tonight, and then I will cancel your debt; otherwise I will force you to live up to the military code." With that he placed his service revolver on the table.

He turned his back on the guests and he walked to the window to breathe fresh air.

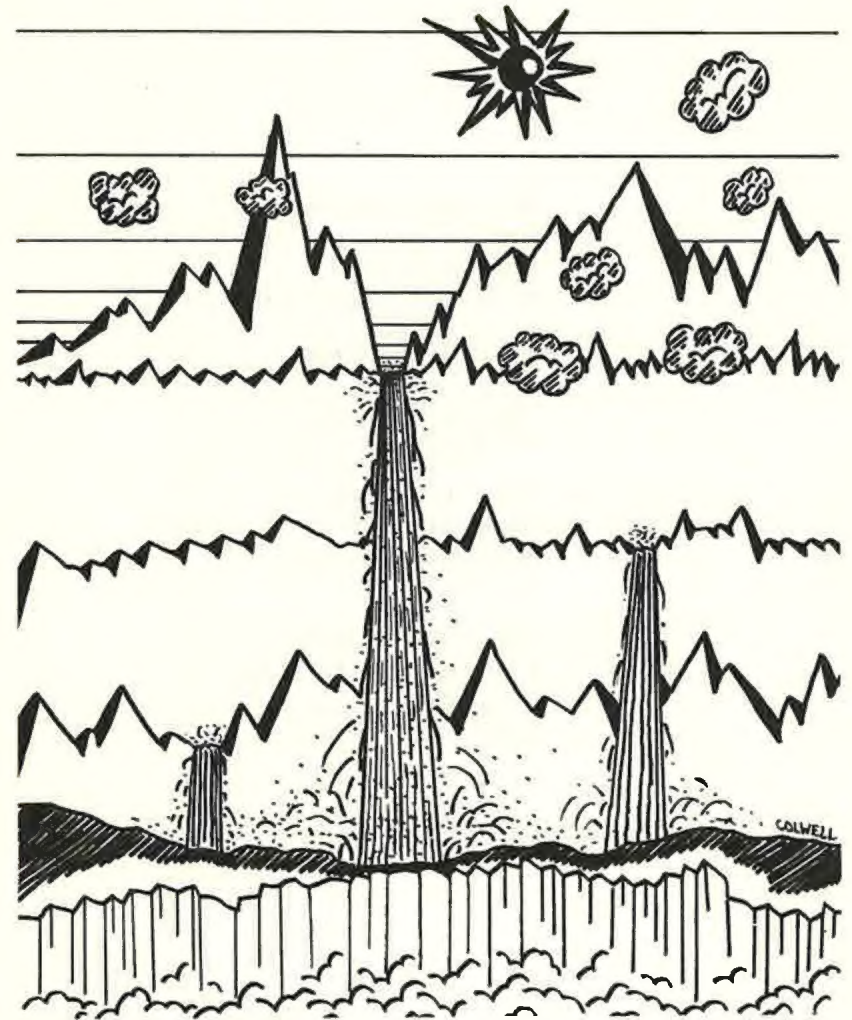
The young husband went into the bedroom with his wife, closed the door, and intermittent sobbing filtered through. Time lay heavily on the group. Is it life or death? What will it be?

The door partially opened, then closed; more time elapsed. Crying was deeper. The door opened, the young husband, standing unusually tall, looked with contempt at his fellow officer. Tears glistened in the corner of his eye, and with military precision he whispered, "Yes."

The women were in a chaos. They wiped tears from their eyes. The other officers stood speechless, not believing this dastardly act. The young bride came out of the bedroom holding her head high, glanced at her husband, and let the officer escort her from the apartment.

As fate would have it, the young bride contracted syphilis and she died shortly after. The lending officer was forced to exonerate his honor by turning the gun on himself because of his disability to pay a card debt. The young husband, disgraced, faded into time.

Ben Shiffman



Colwell

No, I don't need you
Yes, I do care
No, I don't mind
If I'm here and you're there

Yes, I still want you
No, I'll get by
Yes, I still love you
No, I won't cry

Yes, I'll be happy
No, I don't mind
Yes, I'll keep trying
No, I'll be fine

Yes, you must go now
Come on now, don't cry
Yes, I still love you
I love you, good-bye

Stacy Fischer

DEVIL DOGS

To know or not to know, that is the problem of my woe.
Who are these strange beings that I encounter every day?
I pass dragon Ladies on the street,
Who are making it in their own special ways
Slashes of color on their faces remind me of 1000
lashes 10,000 different times
My mind may be tied up in intimate relationships
getting people under my skin forgetting the
pain knowing just where to begin.
Men in dresses
Women in pants, our society is stretching at the
fabric of its seams. Children touching each other
and eating devil dogs filled with cream.
But getting it all experiencing many people is
different than it may seem, were all of those
people in a subliminal dream.

J.E. Woknimak

How descriptive can you make your writing?
Who knows, probably very descriptive or at least very complex.
Let's try to get descriptive, shall we?
Here are several examples of short, dull, un-descriptive, incorrect sentences. Beneath them, I have given them life, existence and purpose. Remember, descriptiveness is the key to winning recognition from the upper class, English professors and employers.

Example Number One

Incorrect: He grabbed the bat and began to swing it.
Correct: He feverishly clenched the massive, sun bleached, mahogany club, propelling it in a horizontal but circular motion.

Example Number Two

Incorrect: That foxy babe has a body that just won't quit!
Correct: That goddess of divine ecstasy and sensuousness has an unparalleled feminine anatomy and bone structure.

Example Number Three

Incorrect: Hey Mike, can I have a sip of your beer?
Correct: Excuse the rude, pointless interruption Michael, but will you allow me the honor of moisturizing my pallet from your alcoholic beverage?

Example Number Four

Incorrect: I have to take a wicked dump!
Correct: I must relieve my bowel annoyance or excrete prematurely!

Example Number Five

Incorrect: Let's fuck!
Correct: Let's merge in a glorious, gratifying orgasmic conquest!

As Theo Saurus once said,
"It's not what you say, but the indispensable expandance of it.
Good luck in your daily writing endeavours."

DAWN

I was alone
Alone in the dark
I was a stranded bird
Waiting to free my thoughts and emotions
A lonely dove in the night
Then you came through the darkness
Seeing me as no one else will
The night is ending
I see the dawn
The dawn of feelings set free
I'm on a journey but not alone
You are there to guide me
Our emotions are in the air
I understand the darkness
Now that there is light
There was darkness in you and me
But now I am soaring
A bird finally set free

Beth Wheeler

AFTER THE SYMPHONY

All the stuffed animals
That had committed suicide
in our attic
Were suddenly revived because
Some woman who looks
Like me
(but has perfect teeth)
Spoke to you of politics and Alice
Until the middle of the night
And forced you to believe
That truancy granted
No more freedoms
Than those you already knew.

Judy Woods



SILENT VESPERS

Unspoken refuge.
Muted anger.
Desperate wretchedness.
Thankfully asleep.

She sleeps with her brows buckled together.
Fetus formed to fit into her anger.
Wrapped around her unspoken refuge.

She asks for nothing; no favors.
She begs to impress with her independence.
Tales of glee concealing her muted anger.

Crying alone in her work, wetting the sheets.
Silent vespers for completeness.
Disregarding her desperate wretchedness.

For hours she ponders dreaming, resembling hunger.
Biding her time, she crawls in unmade splendor
Thoughts cloud her clouds, finally, thankfully asleep.

Unspoken refuge.
Mute anger.
Desperate wretchedness.
Thankfully asleep.

Nancy R. Levey

DREAMING

Places never imaginable
form vividly in my mind
beautiful gardens of color
that enhance my every sense
while visions of white horses
stream through neverending
fields of thought, as the
foaming waves crash along
a moonlit shore slowly
washing away the prints of a forgotten love
all to be put away to dream again once more.

Anonymous

SILENT VESPERS

Unspoken refuge.
Muted anger.
Desperate wretchedness.
Thankfully asleep.

She sleeps with her brows buckled together.
Fetus formed to fit into her anger.
Wrapped around her unspoken refuge.

She asks for nothing; no favors.
She begs to impress with her independence.
Tales of glee concealing her muted anger.

Crying alone in her work, wetting the sheets.
Silent vespers for completeness.
Disregarding her desperate wretchedness.

For hours she ponders dreaming, resembling hunger.
Biding her time, she crawls in unmade splendor
Thoughts cloud her clouds, finally, thankfully asleep.

Unspoken refuge.
Mute anger.
Desperate wretchedness.
Thankfully asleep.

Nancy R. Levey

DREAMING

Places never imaginable
form vividly in my mind
beautiful gardens of color
that enhance my every sense
while visions of white horses
stream through neverending
fields of thought, as the
foaming waves crash along
a moonlit shore slowly
washing away the prints of a forgotten love
all to be put away to dream again once more.

Anonymous

RAOUL DUKE

Cry the Music Cry — Hunter will soon die,

Lines to the Max,
Sales of Jax,
Little girls playing with the Fax,
Life, on it goes.
Fear and loathing in Fat City, or in . . .
And Thompson gets the drugs.

The music lives Insane,
The author has no Brain,
Now there's nothing to Gain.
No gain but no loss.

I lost, we lost for the man writes little
any more.
His mind must be like apple sauce . . .
Mush . . . ?

Adam Greene



Munchkin

John Colwell

SHAMPOO?

As I stood in front of the shampoo section in Medi Mart, I was confronted with an overwhelming choice of shampoos. When I saw an overweight lady with stringy orange hair choose a big bottle of red gloppy liquid, I quickly eliminated this shampoo as one of my choices. However I realized from the television advertisements that no matter which shampoo I use I will be promised a glamorous life.

First I looked at the containers. There were bottles that were squishy, breakable, unbreakable, oblong, skinny, fat, square, and cylindrical. The labels showed pictures of twentieth century foxes in a paradise of freedom and luxury.

The names of the shampoos didn't help me either. Some were short and un-descriptive, such as Prell, Breck, and Earth Born. Others were very long "Gee, Your Hair Smells Terrific." Other titles made me feel as if I was ordering dinner, to name a few there was root beer, cucumber, avocado, strawberry, lemon, tomato, eggs and milk. Maybe I would be better off eating my hair instead of washing it.

Since none of these things could help me decide which shampoo to use, I decided to look at the descriptions. Some claimed they would "clean gently and thoroughly without drying and could bring out the natural beauty of hair." Another said that "It leaves your hair smelling really delicious."

Finally, after not being able to decide what type of menu I wanted to treat my hair to, I concluded that I should read the smaller type on the bottle. I was utterly horrified to find out what was written there. As I looked at the microscopic letters, which only twenty-twenty vision could decipher, I found the most amazing list of chemicals. I wondered if stearamids lactate would do miracles for my dandruff. Would sodium lauryl sulfate bring more bounce to my limp locks? Would cocamide dea add more vitamins to help my strangely split ends? As I saw the bald man in the next row, I wondered if he had ever put tetrasodium edta on his former hair. Was allantoin the thing I had longed for all my life to bring men to my feet? Instead of putting all these unknown qualities on my head I decided to stick to H_2O and bring my chemistry professor with me next time I shop at Medi Mart.

Caryl Taylor

INTER-AGE TURNPIKE

Moving at 50 miles per hour
Trying to read the signs
Looking for your exit
Not knowing if you are north or south
Radio blaring
Cigarette burning the carpet
Passengers screaming different ways to go
Confusion
Tension
Anger
Frustration.

Choices.
Ram into the guard rail
Pull over and demand silence
Plead for order
Keep moving and hope for luck
Turn around and head for home.

Nancy R. Levey

IN MEMORIAM

In the last week of my father's life,
My mother pushed aside the curtains from the windows in his room,
Inviting the October moon to glow full and white, and alive for him.
She would sit by his bed
Content to simply breathe with him (no more alive than he).
Outside, wet leaves slap cold against the bare windows;
My father stirs, he calls faintly;
Summons her with one raised finger.
She hovers, now turns quickly.
My sister Debby and I hear her barefoot steps; she whispers, "Hurry".
My mother and Debby and I in half-sleep
Push the Chickering grand piano across wide floors and thresholds,
Across vacant, shadowy rooms where
He carried four babies on his shoulders, his arms;
Four rollicking, teasing girls on his back and legs.
In the last week
My sister Debby and I in our nightgowns
Sat down to play Chopin and Beethoven for him
In the doorway of his room, of his life;
And my mother held him
Cradled his head in her arms,
Giving him the moonlight
That spilled from her hair
Onto his dying face.

Estelle Judith Uckerman

GOLDEN ASHES

Her mother's voice, speaking calmly, through her hair, across her cheek, soothes her aching body. From another phone, her father's enraged reply to her question, "Is the girl who was driving still alive?", begins to chase the mother-voice dream away, so Nicky must hang up the telephone. She walks out the door and locks it behind her. Then hears the phone begin to ring again, times her descent down the stairs to the beats within the sound of the ringing phone, walks out into the morning sunlight. That she must catch a cab and be at the airport, at twelve thirty her father had said, was the one clear thought she focused on as she began to walk down the street.

Nicky had seen the blood run down her sister Lena's arm at the same time as Lena had. They had looked up at each other then, through the broken glass door, Lena in the dark kitchen, Nicky on the warm patio, and Lena had started to scream. Nicky had been tapping the glass loudly with a spoon and Lena had put her palms against it, told her to shut up. Angry, Nicky had whacked the glass too hard. Now Lena was just screaming and Nicky, looking at the contorted wet face said, "You're getting blood on your dress and Mommie's going to kill you." Behind her sister, Lena saw their mother run into the kitchen. She didn't say anything as Lena was scooped into mother's arms.

"Nicky, go get into the car and wait for me," her mother said gently. Nicky didn't notice her own tears.

"I didn't mean it Mommie, didn't mean it Mommie," Nicky said as she saw blood begin to spill on her mother's white pants. Then she ran.

At the hospital she had had to wait outside of the room where her sister was crying as the doctor stitched her arm. To stop the sound she covered her ears with her hands, closed her eyes and screamed until someone came to get her.

Nicky walked on, her eyes on the next street corner. She had been walking fine for the past few minutes, but suddenly she didn't think her legs could go any farther. They were beginning to feel very weak, her shins melting, melting into the pavement. She stopped, to push her hair back, think about what to do. She remembered that she had hung up on her parents and they must be worried. She saw a phone booth in the next block, walked to it quickly and sat down on the small metal seat.

She had run into the kitchen calling over her shoulder, "Come on Carol. I have the keys, don't forget my cigarettes." Lena had been sitting at the table eating and english muffin.

"Where'r you guys going?" She asked.

"To have a drink," Nicky answered quickly not looking at her.

"Can I go?" Lena asked as Carol their older sister walked in.

"No." Nicky said resolutely.

"Sure she can," said Carol smiling at Lena.

"She isn't old enough. She'll get carded, then we won't be able to stay," Nicky had said. The afternoon sun slanted across the white kitchen floor, fled up the wall, touched the ceiling. "No," Nicky said again walking out the door. Lena followed them watching as they got into the car.

"But I never get to see Carol either and she's leaving tomorrow," said Lena.

"We'll be back soon," the girls called from the car. As Nicky put it into reverse, backing away, Lena had leaned her head against the door frame and followed them with her eyes. Nicky looked away quickly. "Where do you want to go?" she asked Carol.

She picked up the phone and dialed her parents' number. The operator answered.

"Collect call from Nicky," she said.

"I'm sorry, it's busy."

"Thank you." She hung up, leaned her cheek against the cool glass, thought of braiding Lena's hair, one long golden braid, down her back — going up in flames. Tomorrow there would only be golden ashes.

"I have to get to the airport. Catch my plane," she whispered, but she still didn't move. A cool breeze came into the phonebooth, circled around and went back out. On the corner, a woman got out of a small car laughing, and slammed the door. The sun was directly overhead splashing shadows, one of which lay across Nicky's thigh. She traced it with her finger.

Susan Shepherd

Once passing by the many doors of the all girls dorm, I saw a quaint sign. It was written in red ink with a heart and an arrow through it. The caption read as follows, "Oh where is the perfect man?" An obvious valentine statement! That was all. Nothing about the person or people inside. Nothing of the rhyme or reason. Who knows? The prince could be in the very sight of that sign and no one would every know it.

I became offended at the advertisement and thus becoming philosophical sent this note under the door—

Those that dare to ask for perfection will only find imperfection, for no man or woman, dead or alive, is more perfect than his neighbor. And when the neighbor looks for a complete person he or she will find no one of higher quality than him or her self. Could it be that by asking for perfection one is only stating one's imperfection?

I wrote this, checked my spelling, slid it under the door, and kept walking.

Dave Levitan



Meri-Sue Abrams

PROPERO MUSES

Magic?

Gonzalo's kindness against all common sense
was magic,
and the baby's survival.

An island on the horizon
When food and water were gone.

Magic?

Ariel served me from gratitude;
I mastered Calaban in self-defense . . .
He stung himself, we all do.

My daughter's eyes were magic.

I was tired, and buried the book.
A magician in the street is **only** noise and color.
Better, I thought, to watch the sun set uncontested,
avoid by retirement the scholars falling over one another
to raise their own dead
and test their theories against the old words.

I never thought I'd live so long,
or see the young so many,
so ambitious.

Miranda smiles and chides her prince,
so lovesick he neglects the state,
the jackals whispering in the halls.

I freed Ariel,
left Calaban to his devices in the desert,
sailed for home.

Here I abide,
a curiosity,
the first duke overthrown.

Bill Littlefield

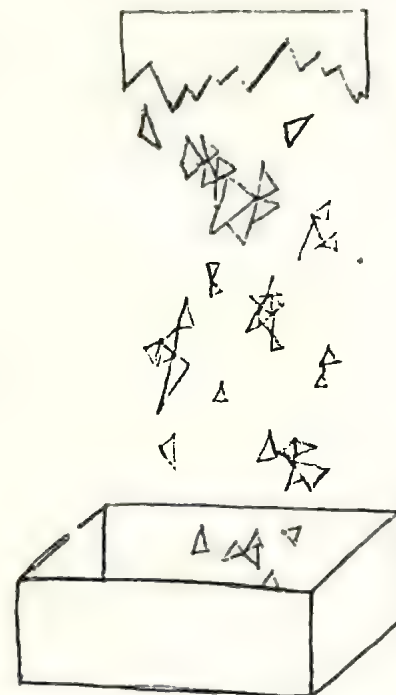
BEING THERE

Baby born
 stained with blood
 shed for the love of him,
 grew in a garden
 untilled.
 Angry,
 Tangled growth
 tried to smother
 all the beauty
 that grew
 in the weeded ground.
 But the earth was fertile
 far from the tangled weeds
 were he rooted
 and became a red rose.
 Forever in bloom
 fragrant and red
 thorns sharpened by time
 stabbed anything
 that tried
 to pick him or
 root beside him
 For his garden would remain
 fertile
 with no chance
 of tangled growth.

Michael Cornwall

Broken glass in a box
 Bits of pane fall about
 Is it all for a cause?
 Was the cause but a shout?
 Broken glass in a box
 Bits of pain cut me deep
 Is it all for a loss?
 Was the cost way too steep?

Sally Brophy



ADVENTURES WITH HENRY

I knew it was going to be an interesting evening as soon as I walked into Henry's front hall with Steve. An absent minded professor — I mean Absent Minded Professor answered the gate. We hailed Henry as his father bopped over to the corner. His father was popping up and down in the corner like a bingo ball machine, about some new discovery. Henry soon came down and calmed us. We asked for a quickie look around as we always did when we were at the Minsky's house.

This house: pandemonium, turvydom, babel, hurly-burly, befuddlement, muss, jumble, it was incredible! There were three small organs, one juke box, and something else in the den. Piles of music, piles of books, piles of piles, everywhere, engulfed the room. The room was faded red, blue, light brown. Over the fireplace which was filled with plants, hung a framed portrait of Saturn. Persian rugs lay on top of squeaky floor boards. The room was smoke filled, but no one was smoking.

We walked into the living room next. I noticed an interesting sphere shaped object on a table, and on top of this object was an apple. I reached to hold it, but it was not there. I was amused. Soon I yelled for Henry. He explained that I was looking at a projected image of an apple. The apple lay underneath the object, and had projecting mirrors surrounding it. On the opposite side of the room was a wall covered top to bottom with equipment. Synthesizers, turntables, graphic equalizers, and other such items lined this wall. There were two grand pianos right behind me; one of which had an animal on it. It was at this point when I noticed the trapeze which hung from the ceiling. No one was hanging.

"Time to go Henry" I said, and we left.

On our way out Henry's dad handed him some keys, and a book on chemical crystal compounds.

"They're beautiful things" Marvin said.

"Hell, no" replied Henry, he took the book, and we fled.

We got into my car, and drove across the river. We were soon to begin our second journey of the night. We parked in front of the Dome, and entered the massive buildings. It is one of the largest set of interconnecting buildings in the world, second only to the Pentagon.

We walked down long corridors which were never ending. After we had walked down three or four endless halls we went outside. We must have been about one mile away from our starting point. Now outside, we were on a back street with no cars. There were just buildings on this street. Parallel to this strip were some abandoned railroad tracks. Mist eroded them; moist vines entangled themselves around the rusty tracks. While walking down this road we saw several interesting buildings. One Henry told us was a small nuclear power plant. I quickened my pace.

Soon we reached the building that we had keys to. Henry fumbled with the keys for a second, and we went in. The early morning was just setting in. It was about two o'clock. We walked up several flights of stairs until we reached the computer center. When we opened the door, it was like James looking into the peach. There was life in this place, at this hour, when one would not at all expect there to be. Inside the hive Steve and I were dumbfounded by computers. Some of these things were so amazing. There was a man, whose name escapes me, who would type into the computer a single program, and thousands of colors

would explode on the screen; all of them being in smooth succession to one another. It was like following an Esher print slowly and consistently, watching the movements compile on each other. The bright T.V. screen of the computer was now making me a bit dizzy. The man with flood pants who was explaining to us in every detail about the process was sounding like a strobe light. I kept saying "yup, uh huh," because if I attempted to try to understand I might have been held hostage there for weeks.

People were working, designing, sleeping everywhere; this was their life. On the walls were very big posters of chips. The inventors of each chip were very serious about their work. So much so that every poster of a chip was signed and dated.

It was all so foreign to me, but I loved it even more because of this. Here I was, with my mind geared in ways that were the antithesis of this. I had trouble with Algebra.

My mind was bleeding. It was so saturated with chips and programs that I was about to scream. We left. Henry asked us if we would like to go up to the largest computer at the center. This one was the core of the entire place. We went up. There were five or six rooms just to hold one computer. It did not feel lonely. The computer was spurting and humming in its own language. Only Henry could understand.

We walked into an office. In this office there was a small terminal which was plugged into an entire computer communication circuit across the entire United States. Henry turned it on by punching in his special code. He checked his mail; it was only computer junk mail. I was a bit confused. He explained to us how through this terminal one could talk with others at big universities who were also plugged in at the same time. We tried to talk to someone, but they were involved in another conversation, so instead we played ping pong on it.

My eyes were getting tired, and so were Steve's. Henry was typing into this thing in some hieroglyphic language. However, he was also a bit weary. We all decided on fresh air.

We were out again on the road with no cars, just buildings. My mind was now clear. We entered the inter-connected buildings that were attached to the Dome from the rear. We walked on going through various departments. When going through the Architecture dept. we had to weave our way through the various sculptures, ramps, and suspended desks. We were now at a metal grate door which was locked. We had just come up hundreds of stairs, and my legs had a headache. There were ten more steps beyond the locked grated door. Henry pulled from his pocket two used street cleaning bristles. They were wonderfully carved. The lock sprang open and bounced on the landing. I picked it up, hung it on the wire door, and then I walked up the ten stairs not knowing where I was. Henry opened the hatch, and we all stepped onto the gravel roof. Up ahead lay the ominous M.I.T. Dome. It was casting shadows from the flood lights and mist.

"Oh my God" I thought.

The top of the Dome was magnificent. The city lay sleeping, but underneath us men and women worked like bees. Mass. Ave. was a row of lights heading towards the moon.

I lay back on the Dome shivering. I looked at Henry and Steve, and thought about what we had done in the past eight hours. My mind was lax. I had visions of chips as I slithered down the curved edge of the Dome to the roof below.

Jenny Schueler

AMBROSIA

The sun never sets
on Lovers days together —
It only sails to the next port
to be embraced once more —
As if God granted it passage.

Jo'Anne M. Kelly

THOUGHTS UPON LEAVING JOANNA

In the morning you are there beside me,
as in a dream.
Rolling over for a kiss,
you get up,
crossing the bedroom
only to leave the door ajar behind you
tempting me to enter
the world and the morning
you've already grown accustomed to.

The memory repeats itself,
as in a dream.
But you're no longer there beside me,
though the door's ajar
and the morning and the world
still conspire to tempt me.

Your name is mentioned on occasion
but I explain away the sorrow,
I explain away the pain.
Our friends are still your friends
and they tell me how you've been
From the postcards you've sent
I gather you're in Paris,
though I wish you were here.

When alone
I speak to you in silence
through the words of a poem
you'll never hear.

Desire leads only to sorrow,
I know that now.
But I need you more than I want you
and I curse the day that you said
goodbye.

Doug Anderson



left
in sorrow
and in anger
and i
not knowing
why
the room
too cold
or i
colder
than before

Doug Anderson

JOURNALS

My person seems unique, but somehow I don't seem sure enough. It seems most things I think, or feel these days, contain a certain level of skepticism. Can one be truly sure of anything he or she does? will it put across the true feeling of my mature state of reason. Why do people say and feel the things they do? I guess it's based on individual personality. In forming opinions it must take a particularly high percentage of prejudice, pro and con involvement to form a set of values on any one thing, does this make sense? why do I ask? why should I think something I write may be considered abnormal in any way? In answering something like this we must proceed to an indepth analysis. Am I sane? who knows?

The unknown Author

Vict

43

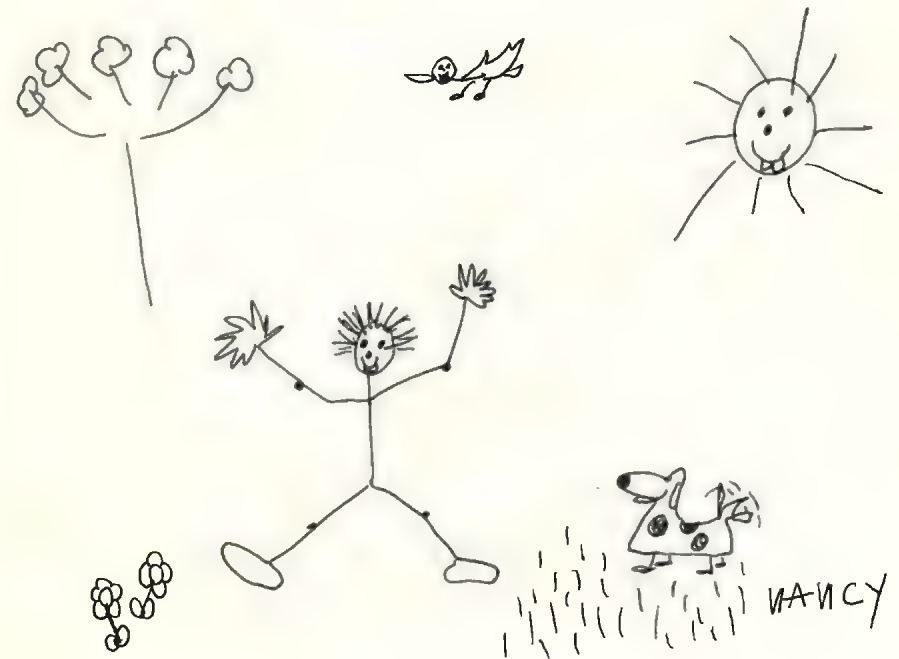


Walter Bailey

SECRET

time winds sideways
and
nips at our asses

Bill Littlefield



TO ABORT THIS ANGER

Go ahead and abort the fetus
But also take my uterus

For I can no longer bear
To see it cry blood
Because it wants to become
A home for a not-yet-human
Being

Take away the embryo
By a Caesarian Section
Yet leave the wound open
So that the empty shelter
May chance to catch
Its breath

Remove this unwanted unborn
That has made my body
Its tomb

Judy Woods



Meri-Sue Abrams

LONELINESS

Loneliness . . .

The quality or state of being lonely, a dull black void. Emptiness nestled in between four walls or barriers of claustrophobic dimensions. Not merely to be alone but to be lonely. A state of not being, not being wanted, not being heard no matter how loud you shout inside yourself. Not being understood. Pushed aside, ignored, dumped, ditched, gotten rid of, unwanted, uncared for. Nothing you have to say matters to anyone but yourself. Loneliness, a lack of true existence, and a feeling of despair. That time when life really is a bitch! Silent tears weeping unheard, unseen, untouched.

Come sit beside the fire and drink a cup of loneliness, a toast to depression. Fill your soul with a cold, chilly, icy cup and never let it be said that you didn't try, just because you couldn't break through.

Sh. R.

HE DIDN'T THINK I KNEW ABOUT THE OTHER SIDE

For every person in this world that believes in something there are just as many people who disbelieve that very thing! So it was when I was a child in grammar school. I went to a Catholic grammar school, St. Ann's. My earlier years were quite an experience (to put it mildly). I'll never forget my former teachers and heaven knows they'll never forget me!

I was what the school psychologist called a "troubled child" stemming back from the fact that my aunt and uncle had died while in a religious order. I had a "vengeance against the good." All I really needed was to be understood. But in the eyes of my teachers, I was known as "the holy terror," deeply in need of God's graces. I'll admit it; I was a rotten kid in my early days. The girls were all terrified that one day I'd creep up behind them and throw ants in their hair. The boys thought I was "cool" and I had many friends . . . at least during school times. (Several mothers refused to let their little boys near me for fear I'd rub something off onto them.)

I don't know what got into me in those days. It seemed that I was always playing some trick or other. My favorite, though, was when I got a bucket of black paint and got my buddies to help me position it over the closet door. It was Father Lednam who would walk into the classroom for religion class in just a few minutes. First of all, Father Lednam was a middle-aged, dumpy looking priest with thinning hair, having a color contrasting his already greying beard. He was the nervous type, always jumping about the front of the room. His humor was as stale as the communion hosts he would give out at Sunday masses.

When Father entered the classroom, he usually walked over to the closet to retrieve a piece of chalk to begin the lesson. Everything went along smoothly,

even though the girls yelled out warnings to Father as he walked in. Their calls were stifled by Father's protests. "Silence," he called and not a word was uttered from the mouths of my classmates. Father did walk to the closet. He opened the door and down fell the paint. Through Father's black face, we could see this incident would not be lightly forgotten. Father Lednam was mad, really mad. "My little Christians, my little Christians," he said over and over again. He walked out of the room. We all laughed when he left. Father returned a half hour or so later. He was all cleaned up now and looked like he was ready to murder! He instructed everyone of us to take out a piece of paper. (Punishment in those days was usually writing — writing prayers, writing the Constitution, writing out our school books!) "I have a little exercise for you all to do. You will write, in no less than five pages, 'What it means to be a Christian.' You may bring it home to finish but you WILL pass it in tomorrow. I will say no more about the incident that has occurred here today. After all, you will have plenty of time to think about it tonight in your hour of silence after school. You will begin writing now!" Everyone's eyes met in horror. How we hated to stay after school. That wouldn't even be the end of it for me. All the "goody-goodies" in the classroom would be after me for getting them all in trouble (and I was right).

Five pages of writing about Christians was a killer, though. I had about two pages worth in me. I wrote extra big but I wrote better than I ever had in my life. I wrote about the goodness of God and about how all people on earth should try to imitate that goodness and be the likeness of God. I threw in something about how all would be rewarded on the last day of the world (if we were good enough). I wrote about how it would be wonderful to live with God and the angels for ever and ever. I even threw in something about the evils of money, how we shouldn't let material things rule our lives. I even wrote about the evils of not being good to other people and how we should treat others as if it

were the last day we'd ever see that person again. I must say, I did a fantastic job on that paper. It had everything that Father wanted to hear.

However, when everyone got their papers back the next day, mine was not among them. I asked Father Lednam about it but all he said was, "See me after school, Bobby. I'd like to talk to you about your paper." I was really excited. I thought that maybe he wanted to praise my work and all through class I had visions of being presented with a medal of achievement.

After school, I went to see Father Lednam. He told me to sit down and to wipe the silly grin off my face. I did that and at that point I knew it was more important than I had suspected.

"Bobby, I'd like to talk to you about this paper."

"It's good, isn't it?" I couldn't help myself.

"Well, that's what I wanted to talk to you about. It just seems . . ." he searched for the right words, "well, you might say it's *too* good."

"Thank you!" I beamed.

"No, no. I don't think you understand what I mean. I mean who helped you with it?"

"Oh, my mother did."

"Aha, just as I had suspected."

"Yeah. She's a much better speller than me!"

No, no. I'm asking you who helped you *write* it. Did you ask your mother for ideas?"

My face went blank.

"Why don't I just ask you straight out? Did you write this paper?"

"Yeah." I was stunned. "I wrote every word of it, Father."

Well, son, I just find that hard to believe. I didn't know that you knew about this 'other side' of life. Why all I've ever seen you doing is bullying other children or pulling pranks. Honestly, Bob, I don't hear your inner self coming through in this paper."

"Did you want me to say that a good Christian puts frogs in a girl's desk or hurts a helpless animal? Is that

what you wanted, Father? I thought good Christians didn't do any of these things. (I never confessed to be a good Christian.) I thought you taught us about being kind and loving to others. Don't *you* even believe that, Father?"

"I just meant to say . . . Well, you've never seemed to use what you've written as a philosophy of life."

"Huh?"

"Let's say you've never shown any signs of believing what you've written or acted it out in any way."

"I'll probably never be a saint, Father. They've already got a Saint Robert, anyway . . . haven't they? But I do know about being kind and loving even if I don't look like I know it."

"O.K. Bob. I'll still never know for sure, though. Can you blame me?"

I just stared at him.

"I thought you would understand after telling me you wrote all that. Can't you see how *I* feel?"

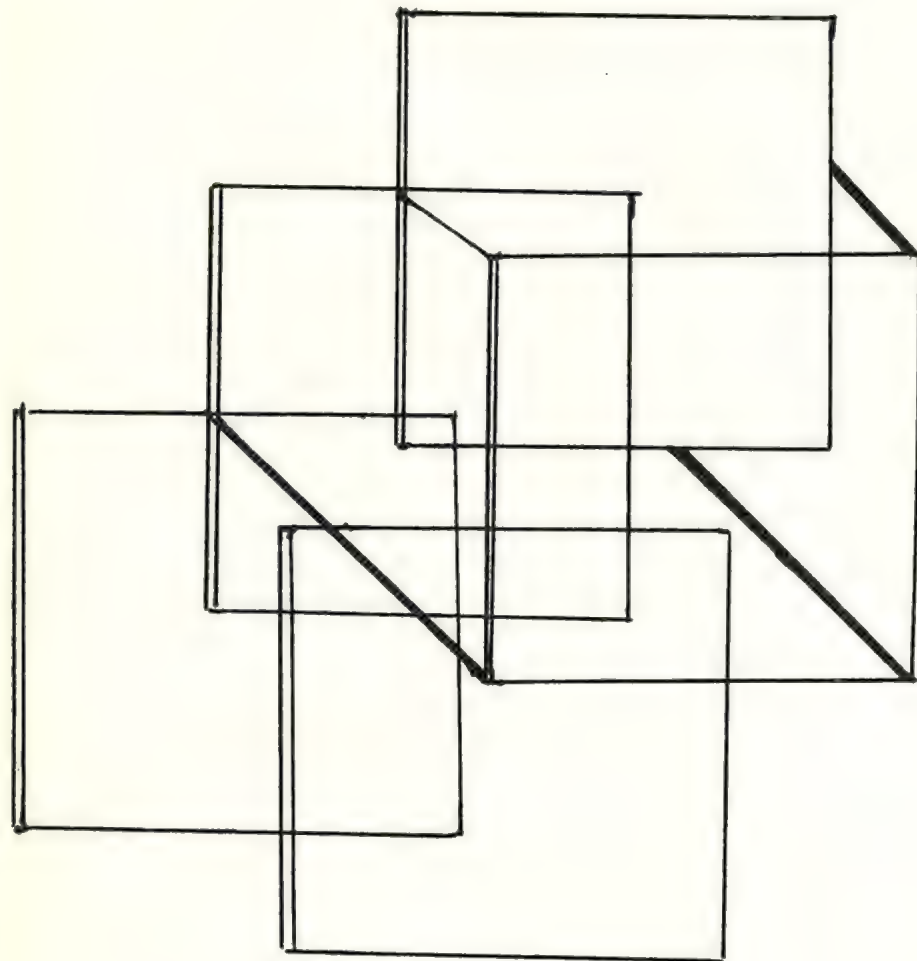
"I thought priests were taught to believe in people!" (Maybe he was absent that day.)

"Maybe we'd better stop now. You go on home. I'll look over your paper tonight, grade it and have it back to you by tomorrow, O.K.?"

I left the room without saying another word.

Father Lednam gave me back my paper a *week* later. I guess he was trying to kill me through the suspense. Anyway, I received the paper back with a big red "D" on it. I didn't question Father about it, though. You might say we were even now. He'd never know, though, when I would strike again. I'll never forget the face he made one Thursday a couple of weeks later when he put his hand into a drawer to get a pen!

All in all, it really wasn't the "D" that I was so upset about. (It wasn't the first "D" I'd seen, nor the last.) It was just the fact that he didn't think I knew about the "other side."



Meri-Sue Abrams

FALL/SUMMER

As the season changes from winter to spring.
The sun starts to come out of its shell and beams
its rays of warm light. The parks start to bloom
in full blossom and the elderly couples start to take
their walks through the parks to stretch their legs from
the long winter.

The boys start tossing the old softball around,
to practice for the long season ahead. In the
school yards the children start to go outside
for lunch time and play kickball and all types
of outdoor games.

The girls start to take off their jackets and now
it is summer time. The cars are getting tuned up
and are dragging down to the shore. The kegs are
flowing as another one is now being tapped. At
night the bonfire is crackling next to the ocean floor
and there is a shiney glow as the sun starts to drop
behind the ocean horizon. The jeeps pull up and
the music starts to grow for tonight's party.

Slowly the partiers disappear underneath
the boardwalk to huddle up with their new companion
for the night.

Then the sun rises like a kite sailing so
gently over the sea. All of a sudden everyone
starts to take off so that they can get home before
their parents find out that they weren't home last
night.

With a couple of hours sleep they awake to start
a brand new day. They do a couple of chores around
the house as they repack their beach bags
for today's activities.

It's great to be a college student on summer vacation
with no worries on your mind except what you got
in Writing Workshop II.

Jeff Suchoff

STORM

The rain is heavy down now
as the roof shook with
every weeping drop

The sky flashed and broke
the dark while noisily
voicing it's discontent

Every raging movement
lingered in our hearts
anticipating it's next
quivering victim

Until it stopped and no
longer did it rage, just
folded slowly engulfed in
its own loneliness.

Anonymous

It's hard to say
"I love you"
on paper,
to express the warm feelings
with a piece of cold lead;
to paint bright emotions in black
and white, and to confine to
a piece of paper,
Will you take my word for it?

Leesa Said

FLOOR SWEEPER

I wanna be a floor sweeper
Sweep those floors all the day
Sweep the hurt of human dirt
Sweep the dust of human lust
Sweep the fears of human years
Get those floors so clean and shiny
With human tears
They rot away.

I wanna be a floor sweeper
And sing the whole today
To up the pennies from the piles
To fill the pocket, to wipe the sweat,
To hold the black man in my care
With human tears
To clear the air.

I wanna be a floor sweeper
And write my epitaph
Between the lines of wooden planks
Amongst the knots and have nots
Amongst the shin and skin splints
That travel in my tread
The echoes leadened on my path:
The final trod, the aftermath.

I wanna be a floor sweeper
Shh! The halls are now decay
The song is in its hymnful prayer
My eyes are worn beyond repair.
It is indeed a dimmed sight:
The walls of paper lay,
I stay.

J. Giannuzzi

SICKLE

The shells cracked perfectly when hit against the side of the bowl. There would be no problem with the scrambled eggs. Butter was melting gracefully in a pan with a low flame under it. The whole kitchen was engulfed with the aroma of breakfast, and the promise of what a good meal it would be. Water was just coming to a full boil in the kettle and I moved quickly to turn down the burner before the steam whistled through the cover. I stopped suddenly — this morning the kettle could whistle as loud and as long as I chose to let it. No one would wake up. No matter how much noise I made, this morning was all mine.

As the eggs poured into the frying pan, I thought about how much fun it was to know that I was the first one up (as always) but that I could make plenty of noise and no one would get up to say "Ssssh! You'll wake the others." Usually it was Mother who tip-toed down the stairs with that boring bit of information. It always irritated me so, but not now; now I wouldn't think about that. I don't have to . . . it will never happen again.

Our house was cold last night, as usual. It is a rather large house and Father says that he cannot afford the oil to keep the whole house at a comfortable temperature so most of the time we run around in layers of thick clothing to keep warm. Both the dining room and the living room have fire places that we light in the evenings so the family stays mostly in those two rooms. I find it stifling to have all seven of us squished into two rooms. Winter is the time I hate most. In summer it is not hard to find ways to avoid them (except at meals), but in winter it is almost impossible.

So there we were, seven people closed off into such a small area just to keep warm. Father is sitting in that

old recliner of his watching the TV faithfully. God only knows what he's looking at; he probably doesn't even know. He doesn't even particularly like TV, but since he doesn't make enough money to heat our whole house, he's pretending that he enjoys the time he spends in the living room. On the couch Mike and John are watching the same dumb program. It must be about cowboys or something because every now and then they start punching each other until Father tells them to stop. They always do that when there's violence on the screen; they start to hit each other.

My mother is sitting in her usual chair and hums to herself while she darns socks and old undershirts. She's not paying any attention to the television or Mike and John's fights. She's somewhere in her own little world, which is so common for her. Little Lori is on the floor coloring in her favorite book and talks to herself occasionally. I get scared when I think of how much like Mother she is — oblivious to all that's around her. She's barely four years old, so maybe it's just her age. I hope so; she's a nice little kid. It would be too bad if she ended up like Mother.

Gary is the only one in the dining room. He says he needs to have space when he's working. He's only doing homework. Maybe he gets away with having "space" because he's the oldest. He's always got his nose in a book even though he never seems to learn anything. Sometimes I think he's a complete idiot; his grades in school don't prove any differently. Why is he wasting his time? It must be awful though to put so much effort into something and never get anything out of it. Like banging your head against the wall, which might be more productive for him.

At least they are all doing something which is more than I could say for myself. I went into the kitchen closing the door behind me and turning on the light. It was so cold in there that I was almost shivering. I got out the milk and two eggs from the refrigerator and managed to find some brownie mix in one of the

cupboards. I enjoy cooking although I don't really care much for eating, so sometimes I just bake for the others. Like tonight.

I followed all the directions on the box and just before pouring the batter into the baking pan. I went into the pantry, stood on a stool, and lifted down the rat poison. I quickly threw about a handful and a half of the gray powder into the mix and stirred carefully. I was afraid that they might be able to taste it so I added some Hershey's syrup to cover the powdery taste. I hurried and put back the rat poison, exactly where I had found it although I realized that no one would ever know that I had moved it. There would be no one left to know.

While placing the pan in the oven, I heard Mother trying to coax Lori into going to bed. She was saying some garbage about it being real late. I stuck my head in the dining room through the door and told my mother to let Lori stay up for another half hour so that she could have a brownie. Lori got all excited and Mother had no choice but to agree to let her stay up. She came over to me and wrapped her small arms around my legs and hugged me. I reached down to pick her up and kissed her on the cheek. Setting her back on her feet I asked her to color a picture for me, and she dutifully ran back to her crayons.

When they were done, I took the brownies out of the oven, cut them neatly into squares, and arranged them on a plate. I had already cleaned the kitchen while I was waiting for them to bake. Then I brought them into the living room and gave everybody one. Gary got up from his work and took one also. They all thought that the brownies were delicious. I think it was the chocolate syrup.

Not long after, all of them were claiming that they were tired. Poor Lori was already asleep on the floor. Mother said she felt a little sick and the boys claimed the same. Gary had already gathered up his books and went upstairs to his room. I knew the rest would follow shortly.

I went upstairs and selected the clothes that I wanted to wear the next day, as I always did. Then I gathered up my blankets, clothes and nightgown, picked up my pillow and went back downstairs where it was warm. Every once in awhile I slept on the living room floor, and no one ever questioned me about it. The floor was carpeted and always vacuumed clean by my mother. I liked to sleep down here for a change. One blanket over me, one under me, and I was warm and comfortable.

I went to the bottom of the stairs and yelled "Good-night" and got very few replies. I went and layed down in the bed I had made for myself. I knew I couldn't fall asleep even if I tried; I had to think of what to do next. Putting on my slippers and robe, I headed for the cellar stairs. They were all too far gone to hear me anyway. There was a long-handled sickle in our cellar that had belonged to some grandfather about fifty years ago. Father had it cleaned and sharpened a few years ago for some sentimental reason, they thought maybe they'd hang it on one of the living room walls for a decoration. I'll bet they never thought that it would be used again.

Taking the sickle up into the living room with me, I waited in dead silence for about an hour before I ascended the staircase. My parents' bedroom had already been decided as the first stop.

Their room was dark and I had to wait until my eyes adjusted to the darkness so that I could see exactly where they each lay. The sickle was very old but to my delight was visibly razor sharp. I went and stood over the big double bed and thought about my reasoning. I would kill Mother first.

I always called them "Mother" and "Father" because these two terms lacked affection and for as long as I called them these names they would know to keep their distance. It had worked effectively.

As I held the sickle over my mother's body, I thought about how much anger she had provoked in

me by never having any opinions of her own. She always went along with whatever my father demanded. She seldom ever left the house. She was becoming a fixture, like a lamp or the wallpaper. Her mind was as bland as her cooking, there was never anything different or exciting in her life. The sickle fell through her body with a disgusting noise and thankfully the blanket absorbed most of the blood. I did not care to see it squirt up like a fountain.

Pulling the sickle out of her broken body, I moved to my father's side of the bed. He was such a poor excuse for a man. He couldn't even make enough money to heat the house and yet he thought that we should treat him like some kind of king while he was in this freezing cold castle. His three sons are just like him which he finds admirable but it turns my stomach to imagine three others like him! I plunged the sickle down on him and pulled it until I heard the flesh rip. He deserved it. I yanked it out of him and wiped the blade on the only clean part of the blanket, which was near his feet.

Next was Gary's room, and I almost laughed aloud. Poor stupid Gary with his own room so that he can study like hell and never learn a damned thing. I opened the door to his room and looked around the darkness for alien objects. You never know what an idiot like Gary might have in the middle of the floor to trip some unsuspecting sister. I never did understand his intrigue with academics since school never does anything for him but crush his ego. I vigorously raised my sickle and sent it crashing into Gary's skull. I have just solved all his problems, I thought to myself.

On to Mike and John's room. It stands to reason that they would have twin beds, they were always together. I always thought they should have been born twins — siamese twins, they are inseparable. They would probably grow up to share the same girlfriend. No, I can't let them do that. In two quick blows to their

chests they were both dead. I was relieved that they didn't still sleep in bunk beds, that would have made this a miserable task.

Lastly, my own room which I share with Lori. She is sleeping so peacefully and I love her so dearly. She is the only one. Too young and innocent to have modeled herself after the other assholes. I want her to live . . . she's got to live. I sat myself on the edge of her bed and could see her small face illuminated slightly by the night-light that she cannot sleep without. My face is burning and I can feel a warm tear gliding down my cheek.

If I let Lori live, she would never be all right. She would surely miss the others. I could not keep her anyway . . . the authorities would take her. I leaned down and kissed her soft hair. Her head felt cold, but that was understandable. The room was freezing. I had to kill her because I loved her so. The sickle pierced her small frame effortlessly and I quickly threw it to the floor and fled down the stairs.

I don't really remember, but I think I took a shower in the downstairs bathroom and I fell asleep sometime during what was left of the night. I awoke at dawn (as always), brushed my teeth, dressed, and proceeded to make my breakfast.

The eggs almost burned in the pan because I am not paying close enough attention to what I am doing. I will have to hurry if I am to be at school on time. I have spent too much time daydreaming. I really don't know much about rat poisoning but it kept them quiet like I hoped it would. I'm pouring boiling water into my instant coffee and thinking that perhaps they were dead before the sickle.

Judy Woods





Crying